



The Quintessential Local Brewpub

In 1989, Phil Bannatyne opened one of the country's first brewpubs in Cambridge's Kendall Square, home to MIT and the Cambridge Innovation Center. Their mission: creativity and sustainability. The ingredients that can be found in a CBC beer are both varied and unexpected, including heather flowers, raisins and fresh apricots. Supporting local ingredients is a top priority for both the brewer and the head chef at CBC. They believe in using sustainably grown produce and sustainably raised meats and fish and always source their ingredients as locally as possible. The brewpub's commitment to local goes beyond a marketing message. While the brewpub provides the ideal environment, network and infrastructure for pursuing a creative and sustainable mission, much of the brewery's success can be attributed to its longtime brew master Will Meyers. He moved from the mid-Atlantic to Boston in 1990 and began pursuing home brewing as well as volunteering at several New England micro breweries before taking a position as an assistant brewer at Cambridge Brewing Company working under original head brewer Darryl

Goss. He was eventually promoted to brewer and then head brewer and has added to the extensive portfolio of beer offerings at CBC.

One of the keys to Meyer's 20 year success is his experimental and creative approach to using local agricultural products to be fermented into delicious beers. Examples include: the Powder Keg Chili Pepper ale, made with ancho and chipotle peppers; Banryu Ichi, a sake/beer hybrid concocted with a local sake brewer; Benevolence, a blend of lambics, sour red ales and barrel aged strong ales, made with 8 different malts, aged in Jack Daniels bourbon casks, with candi sugar, raisins, dates, sour cherries, local honey and lambic yeast added throughout the process.



In 2006, Meyers paired up with Toscanini's, rated the "Best Ice Cream in the World" by the New York Times, to make a series of ice creams made with wort (unfermented beer). The quality of the beers is the top priority. CBC has won a Gold Medal at the World Beer Cup, "Overall Champion" at The Great British Beer Festival, and over the years at least nine medals from the Great American Beer Festival.

Using Local: a Historical Backdrop

Will emphasizes the importance of understanding the deep and rich history of brewing with less than typical ingredients.

"If you make a beer and say, "Here, try this. It has no hops in it, but it's got heather, lavender, sweet gale and yarrow, people are going to look at you like you have two heads. But if you explain what's going on—that is a contemporary interpretation of a beer brewed by wild Pictish warriors in the Northern British Isles long before the Middle Ages—they become intrigued by the story. Their brains tell their palates that this is something cool."

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, the infrastructure for storing and transporting beer didn't exist. High demand for the timeless beverage necessitated that every town and village have their own brewery. Each establishment used local ingredients by necessity, leading to wide differentiation in beer styles within a particular region. To balance out the coarse or astringent flavors that would naturally develop in an uncontrolled environment, the brewer added spices, herbs or adjuncts during the brewing process, creating a wide assortment of beer styles.

The production of beer remained widely decentralized into the 19th century. Larger breweries capitalized on advancing technologies, changing market forces and economies of scale to create and distribute large quantities of industrially produced, homogenized blended beer.

Today, 100 years after the disappearance of most small-scale breweries, there is an artisanal movement with new breweries using local agricultural products to create unique and flavorful microbrews.

During craft beer's resurgence in the 1980s, small breweries worked together to develop their own supply chains, distribution networks and information banks on commercial brewing. The entire industry, including brewers, maltsters and farmers were on the same learning curve. Despite the challenges, Meyers recalls the strong camaraderie amongst brewers, maltsters and farmers, often writing each other letters, discussing brewing methods or sharing local suppliers.

In the 1990s, market forces once again shifted and craft brewing expanded, with



increased craft beer offerings. “When people thought of beer, they thought of beer factories. It’s nice that we could return to the concept of terroir, of local beer, of beer literally made with local ingredients, not just ... manufactured locally,” said Meyers.

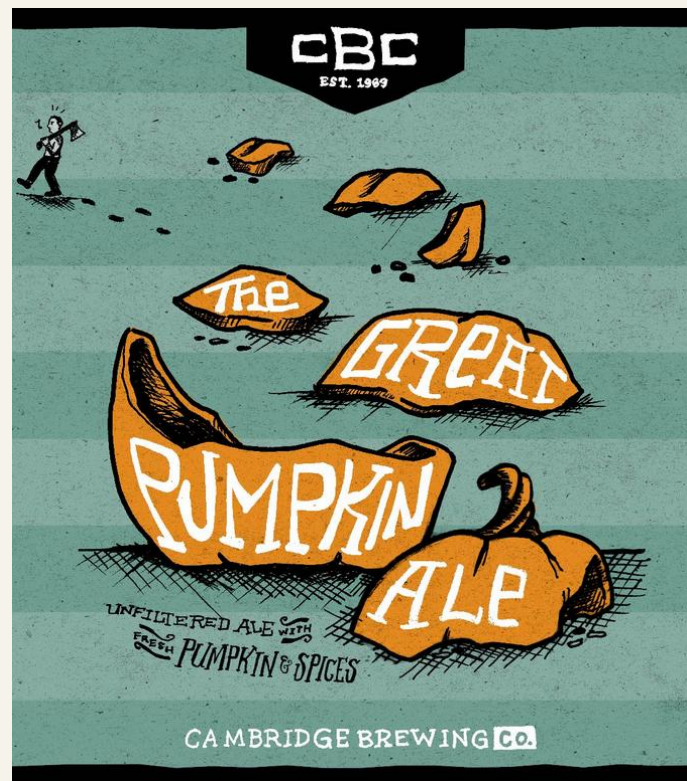
The Massachusetts craft beer scene benefits from large stakeholders in the national market being locally based, such as Boston Brewery (Sam Adams) and Harpoon Brewery. They have provided Massachusetts with a reputation for great craft beer. There are also several smaller area breweries earning national recognition. Massachusetts also has a concentrated customer base. The Beer Advocate, an online beer-rating site that also rates bars and beer stores, as well as Untappd, a social networking service that allows users to check into beers as they drink them, are based in the Boston area.

Local Ingredients

Brewing with local ingredients poses several infrastructural and processing obstacles, according to Meyers. The availability of locally malted grains, consistent quality, alternate methods required to process fresh hops or dried whole flowers, processing for pumpkins, and sourcing in general can be challenging.

Pumpkins

In making his Great Pumpkin Ale every autumn, Meyers gathers a dozen volunteers and creates a production line to chop, scoop and shred the whole fresh pumpkins for brewing. Starting early on a Sunday morning, the brewery and volunteers process the pumpkins in about 3 hours. At their farewell, the CBC team makes sure to let the volunteers know when the pumpkin beer is going to be on tap. Meyers says “all of the pumpkins that have been cut today are going in the



beer tomorrow. Three weeks from now that beer is going to be on tap and in bottles.” So the volunteers, all of whom are our customers, will be able to share this beer with their friends and families and be proud that they personally contributed to its production.

Heather

In 1999, Meyers was looking to re-create historic Scottish brew – heather ale, one of the oldest beer styles which nearly disappeared by the 12th century. The ale used heather flowers to balance the taste of the roasted malt before hops were widely available.

That’s not exactly a farmed product but it’s an agricultural product, and I’ve found that I spent literally a couple of years calling different plant nurseries and such, approaching them and saying “look, I have this really awesome idea for this historical beer, it uses heather flower.” After his diligent two-year search, Meyers found a grower in Westport who understood the opportunity! “Like our Great Pumpkin Ale, CBC’s Heather Ale is a once-a-year brew involving volunteers and staff who help pick the heather flowers. The flowers and other herbs are brought back to the brewery and added to the kettle the very next day.”

Malted Grains

Valley Malt roasted its first batch of malt in September 2010, processing one ton of grain weekly. With a strong support from the agriculture and brewing community, they expanded their facility to process 4-tons per week. Meyers, as well as many other brewers with a focus on local ingredients, says that having a local maltster is an important step in local sourcing.

Promoting Brews with Local Ingredients

CBC maintains an active website and blog that have full-page beer descriptions for every beer brewed. The entries often describe the inspiration or history of a particular beer style, the ingredients used, and the tastes, aromas and mouth feel of the brew. When a local ingredient is used, the beer description also includes the grower’s name, the farm and a link to their website. Meyers notes that it is important to highlight local growers to “make sure that everybody gets the credit they deserve for the work they’ve put forth.”

For example, the beer description for a Belgian style-saison with local raw honey, called Bier de Miel, reads, “This fine beer was brewed with imported pilsner and aromatic barley malt, along with 120 pounds of Cambridge and Jamaica Plain raw honey (we’re not kidding!) from local bee-genius Mike

Graney, whose hives are kept within 5 miles of CBC. Check out Mike Graney's website at Eatlolehoney.com and support local and sustainable agriculture!"



Next Steps

Brewers and farmers can benefit from an infrastructure of information that allows them to work together more easily and more often, such as a detailed list of farmers with the types/varieties of brewing ingredients available. A website where brewers could post entries asking for specific local ingredients, which farmers could then respond to, would be helpful. The quality of local ingredients continues to improve as growers have more experience with grain and hops production, paying

close attention to the ingredient quality and the needs of brewers. Regardless, the ancillary industry, including beer newspapers/magazines, bloggers and ratings sites, will continue to help grow the local craft beer industry. The growth of the local brewing industry alongside that of the national brewing industry indicates a good future for brewers, farmers and beer enthusiasts throughout the area.

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